

This division on the South African War between the Webbs and the Left wing of the Socialist groups lasted for some years. It accounts in the main for their alienation during the next few years from the struggles through which the Labour Party was being brought into effective life. The ILP stigmatised them as Jingoists, which they were not, they regarded the ILP as a bunch of pro-Boers, and regretfully saw the new Labour Party being led off into the wilderness of self-righteousness. There was, however, a great deal going on that they simply did not understand. Keir Hardie and MacDonald knew, better than they did, the oddly romantic souls of many thousands of British workmen and their capacity to be stirred by issues that had nothing to do with bread and butter. They failed entirely to grasp the emotional forces that were to sweep the Liberals back in 1906 with, as their hero, Campbell-Bannerman, simple, straightforward, not clever, but all the better for that, and with a bull-dog tenacity of will, or the immense changes of mood and surges of feeling that were, again in 1906, to send forty Labour MP's to Westminster with Hardie and MacDonald at their head.

A clue to their outlook at the turn of the century is to be found in a very significant article which Sidney Webb wrote for *The Nineteenth Century* in September 1901. He calls it—he is always conspicuously good at titles—Lord Rosebery's Escape from Houndsditch. In this very lively piece, his point of departure is the extension, to that

ambiguous
statesman, of warm congratulations on
having got nd
of the "Gladstoman old clothes" From
Gladstoman
Liberalism, "dead as the dodo," with its
"atomic concep-
tion of society, ' its "obsolete hypocrisies" about
"peoples
rightly struggling to be free," and its "*vieuxjeu*
Victorian
Nationalism," the great centres of population
in England
are, he tells him, "utterly alienated "
Unhappily, the